DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 268 RC 020 059

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TITLE Out of Our Minds: Anti-Intellectualism and Talent Development in American Schooling. Education and Psychology of the Gifted Series.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-8077-3416-0
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 283p.
AVAILABLE FROM Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027 paperback: ISBN-0-8077-3416-0, $24.95; clothbound: ISBN-0-8077-3417-9, $50).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Anti Intellectualism; Capitalism; *Educational Environment; Educational Principles; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; Hidden Curriculum; Higher Education; Human Capital; *Intellectual Development; Intelligence; *Role of Education; Social Stratification; *Special Education; Student Development; Talent Development
IDENTIFIERS School Culture

ABSTRACT

In interpreting the intellectual and cultural contexts of gifted education, this book considers how and why U.S. schooling fails to care for intellect and to develop the talents of all children. Rather than acting as stewards charged with nurturing intellectual development, schools concertedly devalue intellect, and this shortcoming is most striking in the case of the gifted. The culture of schools conditions responses from teachers, students, and parents that constrain learning to specific instrumental purposes. Such objectives are based in prevailing societal values and are part of the larger aims of preparing "competitive" workers to serve the nation's economic interest and, in the case of gifted students, producing efficient and pragmatic technicians and managers who will respond uncritically to what their employers ask of them. Chapters in this book discuss the origins and mechanisms of anti-intellectualism in U.S. schools; how gifted education devalues intellect; effects of poverty, sexism, and racism on intellect (schooling for the subservience of women and minorities); the intellectual potential of schooling and the imperative for thought in postmodern society; and rethinking the potential of schooling (including the role of teachers, equity issues, and prospects for postsecondary education). This book contains over 500 references and name and subject indexes. (SV)

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